

Your Child's Reading

every American—yet 10 million youngsters have trouble in this area; crushing handicap

is too big a time lag between usable reading research and putting it to work in our schools. We in the Office of Education have therefore made the closing of this gap one of our principal goals.

Teachers everywhere, for example, have access to a tremendous store of information resulting from Federally funded educational research. All they need do is write to the Document Reproduction Service of the National Center for Educational Research and Development, 400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20201.

Just in the last four years, the USOE has put \$10 million into reading-research projects which have disclosed a variety of techniques that work in overcoming reading deficiencies. The trick is to put these discoveries to immediate use in the classroom.

Under the "Right to Read" campaign, I plan to speed the process by setting up this spring a network of some 25 information centers to provide local schools, parents, and community leaders with the latest research findings in the field of reading instruction. These centers will be located in the libraries of colleges that train teachers and specialists in reading and have graduate training and research programs.

The idea is to put the centers where the experts and resources are, so that they can meet—at the community level—the needs of educators, parents, and anyone who wants help in diagnosing and treating reading disabilities.

Do you plan any new reading research?

Yes, because despite a lot of valuable new insights that we have yet to supply widely enough, we still do not know enough about the mysterious process by which eye, ear, and brain work together to transfer marks on a sheet of paper into ideas that enrich a mind. For that reason, in 1970 alone the USOE will invest \$16 million in research and development to define further the problems that interfere with the right to read.

We will invest that money by put-



Advanced reading aids have been developed but object is to get them into immediate classroom use.

ting into effect a planning system called "convergence technique" to improve our grasp of what we know about reading, so that future research money will be spent where it will do the most good.

We will sponsor "Sesame Street," the experiment in educational tv for preschool youngsters. We will develop models for bilingual learning to help, in particular, Mexican-American and inner-city children. We will continue the efforts of our Regional Education Laboratories, and of USOE-supported Research and Development Centers, where 40 percent of the work is related to reading and language development.

Is there any best way to learn to read?

I doubt it—although people have written me to say we'll never make it with "Right to Read" unless we

use this method or that one. It seems to me that the particular method used has to be a decision of the local school board and of the teacher involved because people have learned to read in many different ways.

One woman wrote me recently about a successful back-yard summer reading education program she and her family ran for disadvantaged children. I suspect she developed her own method, but the thing that counts is it worked, and everybody concerned had fun doing it.

How did you learn to read, Dr. Allen?

I wish I knew. I think the way I learned was from the hours every evening when my father read to me as I sat on his lap and in that way got me interested. Even before I got to school, my father was reading Shakespeare to me, and, of course,

the Bible was standard reading.

I suspect by the time I got to school I had a pretty good foundation for beginning to read. I was luckier than most because my father was a college president, and my mother was a librarian who always had books around the house and put them before us and read to us.

That is what is so sadly lacking in so many cases among those who don't have even modest material advantages. But it's also lacking in homes where parents who can afford to, no longer read much because they would rather watch television. Reading has taken second place or worse in leisure-time activity.

Through libraries and concerned agencies like the Advertising Council, we hope our "Right to Read" campaign will restore reading to the popularity it deserves. ♦

Than Ever

By PEER J. OPPENHEIMER

where we raised Mary and Jim. It was a last little stand of a once normal life which has become so abnormal lately. I don't mind changes, but I do believe in certain virtues even if they are considered old-fashioned today."

The first great tragedy in her life occurred in 1949, when her daughter Mary suddenly died of polio at age 19.

The death of her daughter was hard on Miss Hayes. Her husband never got over it. He died seven years later. Recently Miss Hayes held an auction of most of the furnishings of her Nyack home to raise \$430,000 for the American Academy of Theater Arts to finance a scholarship in Mary's name.

When her adopted son James, eight years younger than Mary, decided to go into show business, Miss Hayes cautioned him against "going Hollywood."

"But Jimmy had his own ideas. He became a star too fast, and when things didn't work too well, he became disappointed. But he is happier now."

In spite of her Victorian surroundings, Miss Hayes is an energetic woman who has no intention of retiring. Just when everyone was convinced she had made her last professional appearance, she returned to the stage in a revival of "Harvey" with

James Stewart to help her favorite repertory company, Association of Producing Artists. That was followed by "The Front Page." She also found time to publish her memoirs, "On Reflection," which quickly hit the best-seller list, joining her other best seller, "A Gift of Joy," which she co-authored with Louis Funke.

In between, she embarked upon a new career as a university professor, conducting a seminar in play-reading once a week at the Chicago Circle campus of the University of Illinois. "I love working with young people. It is my task to take away some of their fears and anxieties about acting."

Asked what her friends thought of her constant announcements about retiring, she said, "I had a beastly time with some of them. But I came up with an answer. I told them this was my way of not getting the bends. After all, they have to put deep-sea divers into decompression chambers."

"Well, work is my decompression chamber. After a lifetime spent way down deep in the theater, how could I stop all of a sudden? I might get the bends!"

But she will retire, she has promised herself, "even if it takes me 10 years to do it!" ♦



Philippe Halsman

One of Helen Hayes' most famous roles was as Queen Victoria in the play "Victoria Regina" in 1937 on Broadway.



The Bettmann Archive



For her first motion picture, "The Sin of Madelon Claudet" for MGM in 1931, Helen Hayes was given an Oscar.

Helen Hayes and Charles MacArthur, married in 1928, seen here breakfasting in Hollywood, which she disliked.



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